

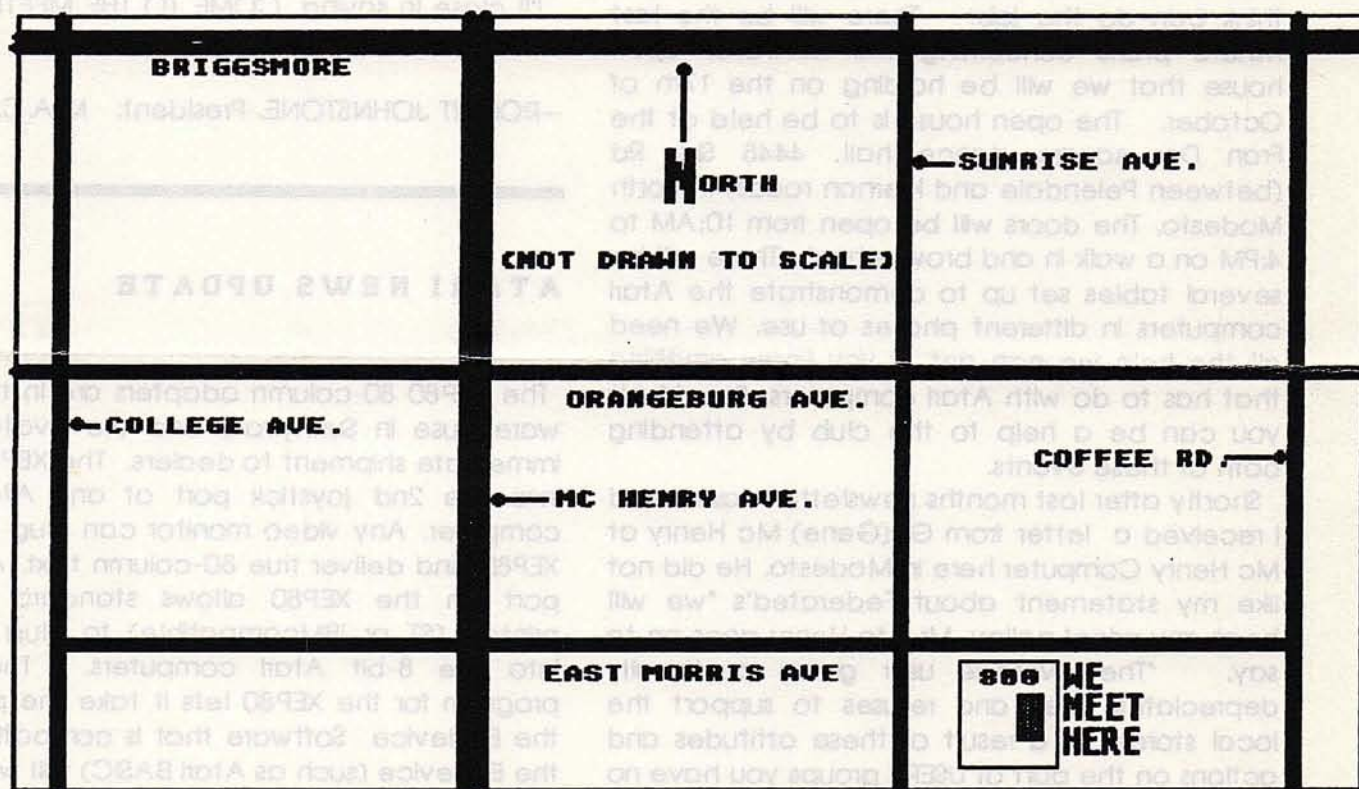
DATA LINK

VOLUME 5, ISSUE 4

OCTOBER, 1987

The official newsletter of the Modesto Atari Computer Club

NOTE THE LOCATION OF OUR MEETING THIS MONTH---800 EAST MORRIS AVE.

**THIS MONTH'S MEETING WILL BE HELD AT:****MODESTO COMMUNITY SERVICE CENTER AUDITORIUM
800 EAST MORRIS AVENUE (JUST EAST OF SUNRISE)****(SEE ROUGH MAP ABOVE--NOT DRAWN TO SCALE)****(UPSTAIRS THIS MONTH)****WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 14TH, at 7:00 PM**

PRESIDENT'S REPORT

Election time is coming up. In the October meeting we will discuss the positions within the club's board of directors that will be open in the November election. This is your chance at fame. Take an office or nominate someone that you think can do the job. There will be the last minute plans concerning the M.A.C.C. open house that we will be holding on the 17th of October. The open house is to be held at the Fran Dor square dance hall, 4448 Sisk Rd (between Pelendale and Klemm roads) in north Modesto. The doors will be open from 10:AM to 4:PM on a walk in and browse basis. There will be several tables set up to demonstrate the Atari computers in different phases of use. We need all the help we can get. If you know anything that has to do with Atari computers, 8 or 16 bit you can be a help to the club by attending both of these events.

Shortly after last month's newsletter was mailed I received a letter from G. (Gene) Mc Henry at Mc Henry Computer here in Modesto. He did not like my statement about Federated's "we will beat any price" policy. Mr. Mc Henry goes on to say, "The average user group continually depreciates, uses and refuses to support the local stores. As a result of these attitudes and actions on the part of USERS groups you have no gripe or reason to be supported by local Computer stores." "The basis of clean good competition and the survival of the Business community is based on not being USED. The reason for closed blds in the construction trades and/or government is to keep all competitors not only honest but to keep unscrupulous persons from rigging prices. I would hope that your remarks in your bulletin be limited to good and honest reporting. I for one am not interested in being bothered by El Cheapo types calling me for prices, taking up my

valuable time, and then taking my prices to T. Federated Group who say "we will beat any price". I would like to remind Mr. Mc Henry that Federated Group is what would be considered "local". In that they are in operation in Modesto and that they do employ approximately 30 Modesto residents. As far as not wanting to be bothered by "El Cheapo types", well sir, those are your customers. People tend to go where they are wanted. If you want them, then serve them. If you want them more than Federated then you'll have them.

I'll close in saying, COME TO THE MEETING. WE WANT YOU!

--ROBERT JOHNSTONE, President, M.A.C.C.

ATARI NEWS UPDATE

The XEP80 80-column adapters are in the Atari warehouse in Sunnyvale and are available for immediate shipment to dealers. The XEP80 plugs into the 2nd joystick port of any Atari 8-bit computer. Any video monitor can plug into the XEP80 and deliver true 80-column text. An extra port on the XEP80 allows standard parallel printers (ST or IBM compatible) to plug directly into the 8-bit Atari computers. The driver program for the XEP80 lets it take the place of the E: device. Software that is compatible with the E: device (such as Atari BASIC) will work in 80 columns without modification. Other software that writes directly to the screen (bypassing the OS) would need modification before working in 80 columns. Atari is working on AtariWriter 80 and Silent Butler 80 to support the XEP80. Delivery dates on these products are not yet set. The XEP80 retails for \$79.95.

--From GENie Atari Roundtable

BBS REPORT**COMPUTER USERS TESTIFY AGAINST FEE INCREASE**

By DEBORAH MESCE
The Associated Press

BOSTON. Thousands of computer users, from hobbyists to doctors, would be driven off their electronic networks if the Federal Communications Commission imposes higher telephone fees on them, opponents of the plan told a congressional panel Friday. The harm to computer users and to the infant information services industry would be far greater than the slight reduction in long-distance rates that might result, they told a House Energy and Commerce subcommittee. Schools would be forced to cut back their use of electronic data bases for research, said John Stuckey, director of academic computing at Northeastern University. Cutbacks also would be forced at hospitals, where doctors rely on computerized medical data bases for quick reference, said Jacqueline Bastille, director of the medical library at Massachusetts General Hospital. In addition, many of the approximately 750,000 home computer users would be driven away from the electronic networks where they read stock reports and news stories, call up airline schedules, and even line up blind dates, said Richard tenEyck of the Boston Computer Society, the largest computer group in the country, with 25,000 members nationwide.

FCC Chairman Dennis R. Patrick, however, testified that fairness is the basis of the proposal to raise telephone fees paid by information service providers. The fees, called access charges, are already paid by long-distance callers, he said. "If we exempt one category of users, that means another category of users will have to pay more," he said. "It's not clear to me it is appropriate in an equity sense if it increases the amount borne by low-income voice users."

Computer users said electronic information

services are already paying their share of phone network costs in a flat-rate surcharge per customer. The access charges are levied on long-distance phone companies to help pay the cost of maintaining the local phone network. The long-distance companies pass these charges on to callers in their rates.

Floyd H. Trogdon, vice president of Telenet Communications Corp., a computer network that connects computer users with information data bases, said the access charges would raise some of its off-peak rates by 500 percent. He estimates that access charges from the computer industry would lower long-distance rates by less than one half of one percent.

The FCC, when it adopted the access charge system in 1982, exempted information service providers from the fees because of the fear that the new industry would not withstand the sudden increase in costs. Now, the FCC believes, it may be time to lift the exemption, but Patrick said the computer industry's opposition to the proposal has not been lost on him.



**WE NEED YOUR HELP AND IDEAS.
JOIN US AT THIS NEXT MEETING--**

ST LIBRARY DISKS



Disk 55: AZARIAN v0.87 (C)
 GO BOARD v1.2 (C,M)
 TORPI (C)
 TUNNEL VISION (C)

Disk 56: ADDRESS BOOK v1.5 (C,M)
 ARC SHELL v1.4 (C,M)
 ATARI CONTROL PANEL (C,M)
 LOOKO (C,M)
 ST WRITER GEM v2.30 (C,M)

DISK #55

AZARIAN (beta version 0.87), by David Stewart (Synergy Development, Canada), is a MEGAROID-type space arcade game which the author plans eventually to market commercially. To quote the instructions, "You command the LF-9 starfighter, an agile and rugged craft designed for quick attacks. Your enemy, the evil Thraxx, a lizard race that specializes in advanced organics for transport and weaponry, has spread across the galaxy and now threatens to dominate the Terran frontier. They, unfortunately, refuse negotiations... YOUR MISSION OBJECTIVES: beware the Thraxx aggressors, destroy as many base stars as possible, and survive as long as possible." Changes since version 0.85 include the ability to function in half-meg machines, both joystick and keyboard support, and faster I/O. The beta designation here does not reflect any bugs, but only that the author is still adding features. Get out your joystick for outstanding arcade game.

GO BOARD version 1.2, by Richard Farrell, is a two player game (you can't play against the

computer). The rules are very simple but play the game well is difficult. I have detailed the rules below, since they are not included with the game. The built-in instructions detail the options available in the menu. These options include clocks, saving and loading of games or partial games, forward and reverse replay of games, as well as board and stone display options. This is shareware for which the author requests, rather than money, that you send your favorite PD program. That's the spirit! Go is a board game that originated in China over 4000 years ago. It reached Japan about 1500 years ago and is currently the most popular board game in that country. By very loose analogy it is to checkers what shogi (the second most popular Japanese board game) is to chess. For those familiar with Othello (or Reversi on the ST), in which markers are captured in a straight line (one dimension), markers in go are captured in a two-dimensional area. It is played on a square 19x19 board ("goban") with black and white flat stones ("go-shi"). White starts with 180 stones a black, who always plays first, starts with 161 stones. The object of the game is to capture territory on the board by completely walling off an area with one's own stones. The opponent's stones which lie within a captured area are removed from the board. Your final score is the number of POINTS you walled-in minus the number of STONES you lost.

TUNNEL VISION is a compiled GFA Basic maze puzzle. The object is simply (ha!) to find your way out of the maze with the allotted amount of fuel. The randomly generated maze is strikingly similar to the MIDI-Maze, for those of you have been fortunate enough to play this great game at recent Atari shows. Options include a map display and the ability to leave a trail over ground already covered. This game program is one of PD distributions provided by David Addison and STEP (ST Enthusiasts of Portland).

TORPI, to quote the author (G. Sheppard), "must be about the 3 millionth computer

battle-ship game". That may be an UNDERstatement, but the game is included here because it includes GFA Basic source code. For those new to BATTLESHIP, a short instruction file is included. Nothing new here, but it's short so don't complain.

DISK #56

THE ADDRESS BOOK version 1.5, by Scott Wade, is a shareware (\$10) address and telephone date base. Along with the normal features of adding, editing, and deleting, this program allows you to print mailing labels and an entire telephone listing. With a modem hooked up it will also dial a number for you. This is a full GEM implementation with a capacity of 500 names.

ST WRITER version 2.30 (now called ST WRITER ELITE) is the third revision of the GEM version of this word processor. Included here are the newest docs (2.20) and configuration program. This version fixes several bugs found when using ST WRITER on the new MEGA STs. One bug did not surface until testing began on the MEGA. The bug caused the program to crash, and all data in the file was lost. After searching the code for about 20 hours, the programming error was found. Although the same bug has been present in all previous versions of ST Writer, a "quirk of fate" prevents the non-GEM version from crashing, so don't throw out your 1.75 or 1.80, since only non-GEM versions can go into AUTO folders. A truly useful feature has been added since ver 2.20; STW now has the ability to locate your position in the current text by typing <ALT>=.

ARC SHELL version 1.4 is the latest revision (I think) of this, the best GEM interface for the absolutely necessary file compression utility, ARC.TTP. It has grown a bit in size to slightly over 5K. ARC.TTP is included for your convenience.

CONTROL.ACC and EMULATOR.ACC are the latest revisions (10/87) from Atari. The two accessories (BOTH of which must be on your boot disk to function properly) now use a total

of only two accessory menu slots. The control panel no longer resets the clock seconds to zero at bootup. They set the printer and RS232 parameters from the control panel and more RS232 speeds are supported.

LOOK0 version 1.04, by Dan Rhea and Robert Birmingham, is a simple program to fool the system into thinking that the first 32K of system memory is the screen display. It allows you to page through memory 32K at a time, or to scroll through at 1280 bytes per click - like "riding glass elevator through memory". The program was written in Mark Williams C v2.0 and the source code is included.

-- Robert Forster, 16-bit Librarian



WHICH OF OUR OFFICERS WOULD
YOU LIKE TO BE? WE NEED YOU!

BRING YOUR IDEAS AND COMMENTS TO THE
MEETING WEDNESDAY. THEY'RE IMPORTANT!
SEE YOU THERE!

(REMEMBER- UPSTAIRS THIS MONTH)

NEW PRODUCTS



Announcing WordUp, the new standard of word processing on the Atari ST. WordUp is the first in a series of superior products that Neutron Engineering (soon to be Neutron Inc.) will be bringing to the ST. WordUp reflects the philosophy of a company committed to producing low cost applications that utilize the potential of the ST to make high end tasks easier and more efficient. WordUp is a full GEM application with multiple windows, desk top icons and all menu selections available from the keyboard (and yes it does work with Thunder!-copyright 1986 Batteries Included-In its as you type mode). WordUp supports any combination of character sizes, faces and styles on the same line. WordUp automatically reformats after any action, including automatically spacing the line for font size changes, superscript, subscript and word wrap. WordUp is the first ST word processor that allows a graphic image and text on the same line. Additionally, text automatically flows around the image, and since the picture is anchored to the surrounding text, it will follow the text during editing-unlike most page metaphorical desk top publishers. This brings up a point as to why we choose to identify WordUp as a word processor even though it possesses many of the features of a desk top publisher. Perhaps, we should call it a document processor since it facilitates the composition and layout of multiple page documents with its powerful formatting capabilities while not limiting the integration of images and quality of output inherent in desktop

publishing. Through combination of access the upper portion of the character sets (which contain foreign, scientific and various symbols) and the variable super/subscript feature, mathematical formatting is possible. Tables and columns of text and graphics are easily set up and maintained with the left, right, center and decimal tab ability. Another first, is user selected symbol or automatically numbered footnotes that appear just as they will print at the bottom of the page; thus allowing, as you might guess, full font and line alignment capability (left, centered and justified) along with seeing the relationship of the footnotes to the body text as you type. WordUp uses GDOS to output to the printer and the screen. Thus, any third party GDOS compatible printer drivers and/or fonts should work with WordUp. WordUp will ship with, as a minimum, three faces (Swiss-serif type, Dutch-sansserif type and Typewriter-monospaced courier type) in 10, 12, 18 and 24 point for the proportional faces and Epson FX-compatible, Star Micronics NB24-10 compatible and Atari SM804 printer drivers. This should cover most popular 9-pin and 24-pin dot matrix printers; however, we are working on more fonts (a font editor) and printer drivers-especially for laser printers. Don't forget that Atari's soon to be released laser printer will run GDOS. As you can probably gather, WordUp has far too many features to describe in detail here. As a result, we will be sending demos to all dealers on our mailing list in the second or third week of September. If your local dealer does not have one at that time then have that dealer contact us. WordUp will ship to dealers in the third week of October. More information can be obtained directly from Neutron Engineering, 908 Camino dos Rios, Thousand Oaks, CA 91360, USA or (805)498-3840. -Shelby Moore 73637,1066 President-Neutron Engineering-

(Reprinted from Zmagazine Information Network, ST-REPORT #8, September 26, 1987, (c) Ron Kovacs/ Syndicate Services)

Heck of a deal! Checking out the SX212

By Bob Woolley
reprinted from the SLCC Journal

For those of you with no modem, or a SIO connect 8-bit modem, or a 300 baud modem (leave anybody out?), Atari has got a great new product for you - the SX212 1200 baud modem. It has a standard RS-232 Interface for those users with an 850, or an ST, or a PIR Connection and an SIO connector for those 8-bitters who lack an RS-232 box. It is Hayes compatible and even has a nice row of LEDs across the front of the unit to keep you informed of its status (High Speed, Auto Answer, Carrier Detect, Off Hook, Receive Data, Send Data, Terminal Ready, and Modem Ready). The best thing about this guy is that it only costs \$99.95 - List Price. A product of Increasing Integration, it is another level up on the path to single chip, 1200 baud, modems - much like the 300 baud XM301 that preceded it.

I can remember my first RS-232 modem. It was also Hayes compatible, which seems to mean that it has to have 6 million switches set before your computer will talk to it. Not the SX212. Absolutely nothing to set on this guy. Move it from your 8-bit to your 16-bit system works just fine with no switch juggling. Aren't any to mess with, anyway. My X-Ray Vision tells me that there are jumpers inside, but it isn't something the average guy is going to fool with. I tried the 212 on my ST with FLASH. Although I am not any kind of TP expert, the modem worked just fine. It seemed to be perfectly happy with XModem downloads and such. Even the operator trying to interrupt my call didn't bring down the modem. Lots of garbage, but carrier stayed up. This is exactly what the computer industry needs. - an affordable product that you just pull from the box and run!

When it came to my 8-bit system, I hit a little snag. Since the modem would connect to the SIO port, it has to either emulate an 850 and the

Hayes modem, or not emulate the 850 and not work on my 8-bit. Guess which one I got?? Works just fine on the PIR Connection as a Hayes (knew that since it worked on the ST). Didn't work at all as an 850. I tried a Status command to every address on the SIO buss and got no response from the SX. One thing for sure, no matter how it works, the modem requires a handler. Some devices load their own handler and some programs replace them with the handler that the program wants. So, without a handler, I had no chance to make the thing work. If the device didn't even talk to the CPU on the SIO buss, how could the handler talk to the modem? The XM301 modem came with an excellent communications program and plenty of documentation on disk to fully describe the handler necessary for that device. I quickly learned that an SIO cable (which is not included in the box - for obvious reasons. You can't use SIO feature without the handler) and a version of EXPRESS will become available from Atari at some future date. I should hope so. Not requiring a PIR Connection or an 850 can save an 8-bit user as much as the cost of the modem itself. This is one of the greatest assets of this device, the ability to run without additional interfaces. Needless to say, this was most discouraging. Maybe a little hacking could help?

There was (is?) a company called Advanced Interface Devices that made a simple RS-232 adapter for the Atari SIO buss. Since the SIO is already a serial buss that can be programmed to operate in almost any mode, they thought they could just write a handler and wire up a cable that would suffice for RS-232 operation. They produced the R-Verter and managed to do exactly what I described - run the SIO as an RS-232 serial interface. With this in mind, and a little more X-Ray Vision, it appeared that Atari was using the same method on the SX212. There is a two chip modem set, a couple of RS-232 receiver/driver chips, an audio amp, an LS logic chip, and some sort of clock generator inside this modem. It would be very unusual for a modem chip set to be able to talk to an Atari SIO buss directly (the XM301 uses a

CHECKING OUT THE SX212

(CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7)

microprocessor to operate as a modem and to talk to the buss). So, I had to conclude that Atari used the R-Verter approach. Close inspection of the SIO pins indicate that the -Command line (pin 7) is not even connected in the SX212. No way to do SIO without that pin. No SIO means an RS-232 emulator. The only one that I am aware of is the AID R-Verter.

So, I logged on to CompuServe and looked for an R-Verter handler in DL2. Luckily, I found exactly what I needed in a file called RVHAND.XMO. It is an R-Verter handler that has been re-compiled for use with HOMETERM. Following the RVHAND.DOC file, I created a copy of HOMETERM that would run on the R-Verter. Booted up on my SX212 and got the 850 status screen. Even though the modem is directly connected, the program thinks it is talking thru an 850. All the commands that I needed worked just fine on HOMETERM - downloads, disk directories, pauses, everything! Tom Neltzel has passed on the word that the same handler will allow the SX212 to run Amodem 7.4, a program that I am not familiar with, but is very popular. I have not tried to replace the handler in EXPRESS seems to use all available memory. None the less, those 8-bit users who own SIO connect 300 baud modems can upgrade to the SX212 and start tele-computing immediately with AModem or HOMETERM.

One or two more comments.

The manual states that the modem cannot be used on an 800XL with a cassette recorder. The Motor line is fed into the modem and is grounded thru a 680 ohm resistor. This appears to upset the 800XL and the rest of the Atari line in this respect, so expect this restriction to apply to all 8-bit models.

A suggestion is made to place the modem on top of your disk drive and the phone on top of the modem. Some telephones have magnets in

them - put it someplace else if you are not sure. Some disk drives generate considerable heat, while the SX212 seems very cool. I put my modem under my drive, leaving the vents on top of the drive clear for good cooling.

The bottom line on this modem is that it is a great value for the money, performs well and can be used on either 8 or 16 bit systems with a minimum of expertise. The 8-bit software is not yet available from Atari, but even that can be fixed for the time being. No modem offers you so much for so little. Don't overlook this bargain!!

Are you a customer of WHITEHOUSE COMPUTER??

Zmag reader Shawn Harmon recently informed us about the rip-off of many by this firm. Current information tells us that the firm has closed a filed bankruptcy. In the letter received, there were over \$200,000 in claims with only \$20,000 in assets. Whitehouse Computer is located in Williamsport, PA. If you are one of the many waiting for goods or you have encountered a few problems, here is what you can do to hopefully get your monies back!

Contact:

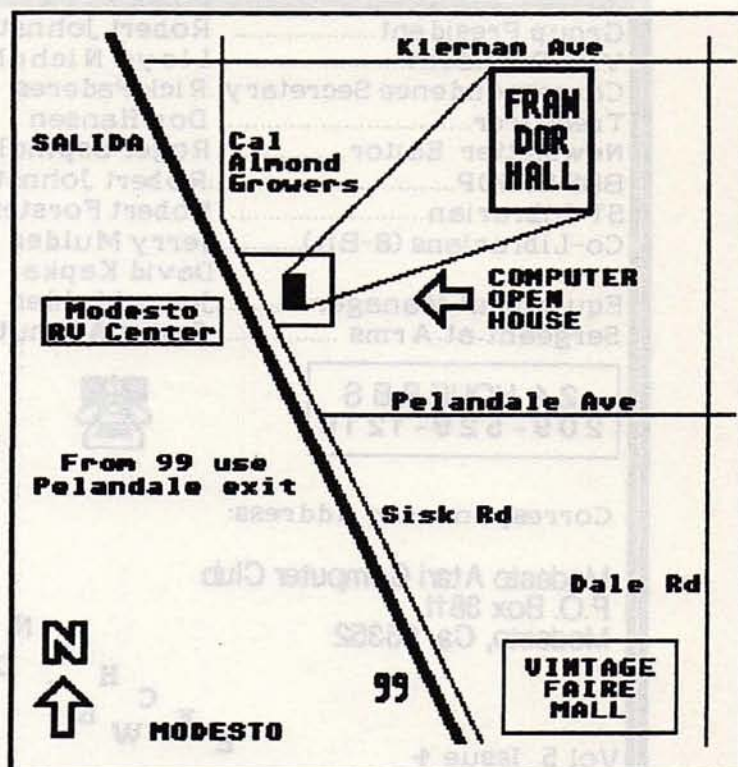
- (1) Bureau of Consumer Protection
1-717-963-4913 Attn: Mr. McGowen
- (2) Better Business Bureau, Scranton, PA
- (3) United States Postal Inspector

Please write a letter to the B.C.P with a copy to the US Postal Inspector and the PA Better Business Bureau. Include your cancelled check with a full explanation of what you have done to retrieve your goods. Zmag will keep you informed as this story progresses.

(Reprinted from Zmagazine Information Network
St-Report #8, September 26, 1987
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Modesto Atari Computer Club

is sponsoring a free



COMPUTER OPEN HOUSE

On Saturday, October 17, from 10 am to 4 pm

At Fran Dor Hall, 4448 Sisk Rd (99 frontage)

For further information call: (209) 527-6838

- If you are a new or prospective computer user...
- If you have questions about computers or software...
- If you are an experienced user and are looking for people with similar interests...

Bring your questions, or just drop by and say hello.

What will be happening?

- computer and software demonstrations
- large public domain software libraries
- people to answer your questions
- special help for first-time computer users

(M.A.C.C. is a non-profit club -- we don't sell computers)

Group President..... Robert Johnstone
 Vice President..... Lloyd Nicholas
 Correspondence Secretary..... Rick Paderes
 Treasurer..... Don Hansen
 Newsletter Editor..... Roger Espinola
 BBS SYSOP..... Robert Johnstone
 ST-Librarian..... Robert Forster
 Co-Librarians (8-Bit)..... Jerry Mulder
 David Kapka
 Equipment Manager..... Jerry Mulder
 Sergeant-at-Arms..... Gerry Anshutz

24 HOUR BBS
209-529-1219



Correspondence Address:

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 P.O. Box 3811
 Modesto, Ca. 95352

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 October, 1987

E X C H A N G E
 W E L C O M E

MEMBERSHIP BENEFITS :
 Disk Library (now has 95 disks)
 Discount purchases at various area vendors
 Support from other ATARI users
 A monthly Newsletter
 ST SIG plus ST Library Disks
 ATARI User Group Support

(PLEASE NOTE)

Items for print in the newsletter must be submitted 14 days before the next meeting
 (handwritten copy okay if legible)

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Modesto Atari Computer Club
 P.O. Box 3811
 Modesto, Ca. 95352



Our next Meeting:
 October 14, 1987
 (Wednesday) 7:00 pm

LOOK

TO :

SLCC Newsletter Exchange
 P.O. BOX 1506
 San Leandro CA 94577

At:

Modesto Community Service Center Auditorium
 800 E. Morris Ave.
 (Just east of Sunrise)

(UPSTAIRS THIS MONTH)